THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) The World Road Statistics, 2006, which provides the data for the year 2003 in respect of India, indicates that the number of persons killed per lakh of population in India is 8.08.

(b) Yes, Sir. As per the preliminary tentative data, covering the majority of States and Union Territories, the number of deaths due to road accident is estimated at more than a lakh (1,01,439) during the year 2006 as compared to the figure of 94,968 deaths for the year 2005.

(c) The safety of road users is primarily the responsibility of the concerned State Government. However, this department has taken several steps to improve road safety for the road users which are as under:

(i) Road safety is the integral part of road design at the planning stage for National Highways/Expressways.

(ii) Various steps to enhance road safety such as road furniture, road markings/road signs, introduction of Highway Traffic Management System using Intelligent Transport System, enhancement of discipline among contractors during construction, road safety audit on selected stretches, have been undertaken by National Highways Authority of India (NHAI).

(iii) Refresher training to Heavy Motor Vehicle drivers in the unorganized sector.

(iv) Involvement of NGOs for road safety activthes by Department of Road Transport and Highways and NHAI.

(v) Setting up of Model Driving Training School in the country by Department of Road Transport and Highways.

(vi) Publicity campaign on road safety awareness through audio-visual-print media by Department of Road Transport and Highways.

(vii) Institution of National Award for voluntary organizations/individual for outstanding work in the field of road safety by Department of Road Transport and Highways.

(viii) Tighteningof safety standards of vehicles.

(ix) Provision of cranes and ambulances to various State Governments/NGOs under National Highway Accident Relief Service Scheme. National Highways Authority of India also provides ambulances at a distance of 50 Km. on each of its completed Highways under its Operation and Maintenance contracts.

(x) Widening and improvements of National Highways from "2 lanes to 4 lanes and 4 lanes to 6 lanes etc.

Financial help to NGOs involved in road safety

1898. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government helps NGOs involved in road safety work;

(b) the intent of fmancial help given to NGOs for road safety in 2006-07;

(c) whether it is a fact that many NGOs like the Road Safety Forum do not seek or obtain help from NHAI, other agencies and Government;

(d) whether it is a fact that Government gives more weight to funded NGOs rather than public service oriented organizations; and

(e) the steps proposed to give high emphasis to suggestions from voluntary bodies who are not funded by NHAI and Government to increase road safety?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Financial assistance is being given to the NGOs by this Ministry for administering the road safety programme and for imparting two-day refresher training programme to the heavy motor vehicle (HMV) drivers in the unorganized sector.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) and (e) All the NGOs whether funded or not funded by this Ministry are being given the same weightage. Any constructive suggestion with regard to road safety measures received from voluntary bodies in this Ministry is given due consideration by this Ministry.

Rest areas on NH-S in Andhra Pradesh

1899. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that NHAI has not built any rest areas on NH-5 in Andhra Pradesh in the last three years;

(b) whether it is a fact that there is a long standing demand for a rest area on NH-5 by the Road Safety Forum;

(c) whether NHAI has acquired 20 acres of land for a rest area and then colluded with speculators and quietly released the land;

(d) the latest status of the proposal for a rest area on NH-5 between Vijayawada-Rajahmundry; and

(e) the steps proposed to address grievances by NHAI?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPFNG, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) No, Sir

(d) and (e) Land has been acquired at Sinagavaram near Eluru on Vijayawada-Rajahmundry section of NH-5 for developing a comprehensive rest area.